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FLOOR DEBATE

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should be the basis for any policy that the state adopts. We should be addressing this as an agricultural problem and not as a wildlife management and recreational requirement. I met with John Hobbs, the state director of the USDA Wildlife Services, this morning. This is what they do with the service that he operates. They're the ones that take care of our coyotes in the western end of Nebraska. At the present time, the counties are the one that fund the money and the federal government matches part of the money to get funding to have people out there to trap our coyotes that are causing problems. At the present time, they're moving into eastern Nebraska and the Omaha area, and this same director of Wildlife Services from USDA has a contract with getting rid of the starlings in the First National Bank in Omaha. This is a threat for the Omaha area people. Starlings are birds that cause all kinds of problems. They carry diseases that people can contract. I think there's some in the Grand Island area that they are also getting a contract with to eradicate the European starlings in that area. This is something that the feral swine, the starlings, and this sort of thing isn't...shouldn't be in the Game and Parks division. This is an agricultural problem. It should be under the Agriculture Department. A state veterinarian can decide if they're feral swine, then they can be destroyed. It works through the USDA Wildlife Services. And this is someplace that I think we have to be very careful on what we do in the future on how we handle this wording in this legislation. Right now, if you...the legislation that's there in the amendment, LB 29, there's no penalty for killing a domestic hog by mistake in LB 29. It gives the Game and Parks the sole ability to kill the feral swine, and it provides no penalty for the Game and Parks should a domestic swine be killed. What happens if the agency makes a mistake? What happens if one of the agents that's authorized by the Game and Parks make a mistake? Does the agent of Game and Parks have to make restitution to the hog's owner? These are questions that are not addressed in LB 29. And also, when I was talking to Mr. Hobbs this morning, I asked him, what is the definition of a feral swine? And he said the wildlife professionals, what they consider feral is a word that means born in the wild.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.